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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

(c) REVIEW OF REPORTS BY DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES ON MEASURES TAKEN TO ASSIST IN THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES OF AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES OF REGIONS OTHER THAN AFRICA, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON FINANCIAL RESOURCES THEY HAVE PROVIDED, OR ARE PROVIDING, UNDER THE CONVENTION

Addendum

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Note by the secretariat

[1] ICCD/COP(4)/1.

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PART ONE: COMPILATION OF SUMMARIES OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Conference of the Parties, by its decisions 11/COP.1 and 4/COP.3, requested the secretariat to prepare a compilation of summaries of reports submitted by developed country Parties to the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties. Only the reports on regions other than Africa will be considered by the COP 4.

2. Part One of this document contains the compilation of the summaries of reports on measures to assist regions other than Africa submitted by twelve developed country Parties. Nine of them were included in the synthesis presented in Part Two. These are: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland and United Kingdom. The synthesis does not include the information contained in the reports of France, Israel and Japan, which were received by the secretariat after the synthesis was completed. The secretariat will also make all reports from developed country Parties available on the UNCCD secretariat's Web site (www.unccd.int) for wider circulation.

II. SUMMARIES OF REPORTS[2]

A. Belgium

After having participated in the INCD process from the very beginning in 1992, Belgium became a Party to the UNCCD on 30 June 1997. Belgium has a long-standing history of activities in combating desertification, particularly in Africa. Now the UNCCD offers an international legal framework for a renewed attention towards the desertification problem and Belgium stands ready to continue and improve its actions in this field.

In accordance with the Convention text and decision 11/COP.1, developed country Parties shall report, at each session of the Conference of the Parties, on measures taken to assist action programmes of those affected developing country Parties reporting for the session, and submit this report at least six months prior to the session at which they are to be reviewed. This means that for the present year Belgium will report on its desertification activities in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and other affected country Parties.

In order to understand how these activities have taken place in the past and ongoing projects are being executed at present, a brief overview of the former general framework for development cooperation in which they operate (d) is hereby given, including a list of those projects and the related financial resources. More importantly, some space has been reserved for the explanation of the policy plan for the Belgian international cooperation as it now stands, following a thorough rethinking and reorganization. After all, this plan will be the framework within which all future actions regarding the combat of desertification will be conceived and implemented.

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[2] Reproduced without formal editing by the UNCCD secretariat.

From this plan it is clear that the main principles of UNCCD coincide with the broad policy outlook and specific strategies of the Belgian international cooperation. The UNCCD emphasis on national action programmes, the participatory approach and the action at grass-root levels (bottom-up approach) all have a direct bearing on the Belgian vision about international cooperation.

The same can be said in relation to the sectoral priorities where care for the environment and gender issues are among the main themes. On the other hand, the geographical priorities ensure a worldwide presence while at the same time limiting the Belgian interventions to a fixed number of partner countries within each region. The geographical priorities, with the number being reduced to 25 nations, also explain the difference between the past actions, as well as the present ongoing activities and the directions for the future.

The bulk of this report is dedicated to Belgium's specific actions, past and ongoing, in th combat of desertification. In order to get an easy access to the information, according to the individual interest, a separation has been introduced between the geographical areas mentioned above. For each region the listed activities include both research and development projects and pure development projects. The latter ones cover initiatives executed by the government as well as by NGOs.

In a way the first group of activities is related to the concerns and the work of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the Convention and intends to demonstrate the Belgian expertise, while at the same time showing the possibilities for future response to the developments within CST.

B. Canada

Canada has been fully involved in the challenges posed by desertification, and in the global response to it, including as a Party to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). In the developing world, Canada has a long tradition of helping countries and communities combat desertification and related problems through its official development assistance programme (ODA), which is delivered by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the International Development Research Center (IDRC).

Canadian cooperation takes place at all levels of intervention: multilateral, regional/subregional, national, and community, working with civil society. In the shared effort to combat desertification, CIDA takes an approach that emphasizes poverty reduction, capacity-building, and local initiatives with broad participation.

Since ratifying the UNCCD, in 1995, Canada continues to support many countries, particularly in Africa, in their fight against desertification. Cooperation in combating desertification is largely facilitated by the fact that the Convention's principles are in close harmony with the mandate and priorities of Canadian assistance. Over the years, CIDA has implemented hundreds of projects in affected countries, which contributed directly and indirectl to combating desertification.

Canada has supported particular National Action Plan (NAP) processes, as in Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso, where we provided financial and technical assistance, and participated on the Committee responsible for developing the national fund under the NAP. Although Canada has not participated in activities in support of National or Regional Action Plans in 1999, we continue to monitor the evolution of these processes, in order to remain responsive to the needs and priorities identified by developing countries.

Canada also helps to fund a wide array of multilateral and regional organizations working to combat desertification, such as United Nations agencies, the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), regional development banks, and specialized bodies such as the Global Environment Fund (GEF), the Comité Permanent Inter-États pour la lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel (CILSS), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and many more.

A major part of Canada's response has come from partners outside government, such as NGOs, communities, the private sector, and the academic community. A particular role has been played by Solidarité Canada Sahel, a coalition of NGOs that represents the North American focal point for NGO involvement in the Convention. Efforts are being made to raise awareness in Canada and abroad about the plight of people in affected countries. Our partner NGOs play an active role in this important task, ensuring wide dissemination of information. Films, teaching kits, internet tools, press kits, and even a CD have been used to increase knowledge about desertification and related problems.

The International Development Research Center (IDRC) is also contributing to finding solutions, through research and science, to the concerns of dryland countries. For example, IDRC's, People, Land and Water research theme focuses on soil management and water quality in Africa and the Middle East, to prevent environmental degradation. The IDRC has also assisted countries in defining useful indicators to monitor the implementation of the Convention.

A number of new initiatives to address desertification in affected developing countries have begun in 1999, many of which are implemented with the support of local and Canadian civil society. Efforts are continuously being made to use a holistic approach that integrates environmental concerns in development projects. Some new projects demonstrate a clear link between the fight against desertification and other issues, such as the protection of biological diversity. Emphasis is placed on building communities' capacities to manage their natural resources in a sustainable way. Assistance in decentralization of management structures, targeted training, awareness raising, and civil society support, for example, ensure that ownership of the process is placed in the hands of affected people.

Canada continues to be engaged in the fight against desertification, both at home and abroad. Indeed, Canada is also an affected country, and will submit, at the fourth Conference of Parties, its first report on domestic implementation of the Convention.

C. Denmark[3]

Denmark has a strong and long lasting tradition within international development cooperation, poverty reduction being the overriding objective in the efforts to promote sustainable development.

Denmark is dedicating one per cent of its GNP to official development assistance. This effort is supplemented by the Danish Environment, Peace and Stability Fund part of which supports programmes promoting the environmental aspect of environment and sustainable development in developing countries. At present, this support amounts to a further 0.08 per cent of the Danish GNP.

Following the report of the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, Denmark has worked hard to further develop the concept of "sustainable development" and mainstreamed environment as a cross cutting issue for Danish development assistance.

Denmark has for many years supported activities to combat desertification bilaterally as well as multilaterally, especially in Africa.

Denmark has also rendered financial support in order to help further the process leading to the framing of the UNCCD.

Furthermore, at the political level, the promotion of sustainable management of natural resources and other environmental issues is an integral part of the annual multilateral and bilateral consultations with major development partner countries and provide an opportunity to discuss the problems of desertification and land degradation.

Denmark has engaged in debates concerning the best way to promote the effective and timely implementation of the UNCCD within the frameworks of the European Union, the GEF and the OECD.

The bilateral assistance is concentrated on a number of selected sectors in each of the 20 development partner countries in order to achieve maximum development impact. In 16 countries Danish support is directly focusing on environment as a sector with an emphasis on capacity-building in environment. Furthermore within sectors such as agriculture, water and energy a large number of concrete activities directly aiming at promoting the objectives of the UNCCD is supported. Support for sustainable agriculture is growing both in absolute and relative terms in the bilateral assistance. Denmark favours a gradual integration of these activities in the National Action Plans (NAP) with a view to ensuring a corresponding increase of the necessary capacity in developing countries.

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[3] Two paragraphs related to measures taken to support the implementation of the Convention in affected African countries are not included in this compilation but could be found in the whole report of Denmark posted on the Web site.

An important feature of the Danish development assistance is the contribution made by members of the Danish resource base in a continuous and fruitful dialogue. Thus, Danish NGOs are involved in the combat against desertification along with members of the Danish research community and private sector.

Denmark has supported programmes administered by Danish NGOs (the Danish Red Cross, Dan Church Aid, Care Denmark and DOF-Birdlife Denmark) focused on agro-forestry and agriculture and/or natural resource management in general in drought stricken areas in Africa.

Research into the nature, causes and effects of desertification is important for an effective implementation of the UNCCD. Therefore, Denmark is an active partner and supporter of research activities within this field. Support has been rendered through international research centres as CGIAR, through the official Danish research assistance programme ENRECA (Enhancing Research Capacity in developing countries) and partly as direct technical support including technology transfer from the Danish research environment to scientific institutions in developing countries.

Denmark recognizes the importance of awareness raising and facilitation of public debate and implementation. Therefore, Denmark has supported awareness raising initiatives concerning the problems of desertification and promotion of the UNCCD both in Denmark and abroad. Thus support has been given to awareness raising activities targeting owners of small family based farms in areas affected by desertification and through an international network of NGOs. In Denmark, the awareness raising effort has been developed as a two-pronged strategy aiming at raising awareness both within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and among the general public as well as among opinion makers.

Through the multilateral development cooperation Denmark has made substantial donations to several international organizations and programmes acting on desertification and drought. Danish support has been rendered to concrete projects implemented by organizations such as UNDP/UNSO, FAO or the World Bank but also to regional organizations.

Among the international organizations that have received major support from Denmark, especially GEF and UNEP should be mentioned along with international NGOs like the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED). Simultaneously, Denmark has been active within the framework of the European Union in the combat against desertification.

D. Finland

This is the second report by Finland to the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The report focuses on the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Finland considers desertification and drought issues among the major concerns in the global environmental agenda and is thus a firm supporter of the UNCCD. In Finland's official development assistance (ODA) poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and sustainable

development are the central elements as well as equality, good governance, democracy and respect for human rights. These policy principles guide the Finnish ODA allocations, including the mitigation of desertification and drought problems.

Desertification and drought must be understood as cross-cutting issues. They can only be tackled through both the internalization of the issues within each sector and through cross-sectoral cooperation. Finland considers this to be the role of the Action Programmes (APs) in combating desertification and mitigating drought effects.

In Latin America and the Caribbean Finland is not currently providing direct support to any action programmes of affected countries. Consequently Finland is not involved in any respective consultative processes or partnership arrangements either. Activities in relevant sectoral assistance processes in support of combating deforestation are relatively limited. It is expected that more emphasis will be put in the future on the direct support to UNCCD implementation in affected countries. The prioritization of desertification and drought related issues by the Development Partner Countries is continuously encouraged.

In Middle East Finland is currently financing a project aimed at improving the capacity of six Arab countries to implement the UNCCD, covering Jordan, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and Palestinian Authority. This three-year project is implemented by the countries involved and technical assistance is facilitated by UNDP/UNSO. The funding, total of US$ 1.5 million is channelled through UNSO. The objectives of the project are related to the launching, preparation and implementation of NAPs, creating mechanisms to advance subregional cooperation and developing strategies for resource mobilisation. The project includes support to national action programmes in four Asian countries and is expected to have a positive impact on the consequent consultative processes and partnership arrangements. Subregional action plan activities facilitated by this project will involve each country in west Asia region.

The involvement of Finland in sectoral assistance processes in support of combating desertification are limited in the Asia region. The prioritization of desertification and drought related issues by the Development Partner Countries is encouraged. Activities in relevant sectoral assistance processes in support of combating deforestation include an NGO project in Rajastan, India, aiming at combating desertification through training. In 1998 Finland financed and published a study with the Central Asian countries called: Environmental development cooperation opportunities. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, which identifies potential donor projects in the environmental sector, including various projects related to desertification and drought. In the mid-nineties Finland contributed towards the World Bank driven Aral Sea programme US$ 200,000.

Finland has contributed both to the core budget of the UNCCD and on a voluntary basis from the very beginning of the Convention. Finland is also supporting developing countries through multilateral channels, e.g. EC, MFIs and the United Nations in their endeavour to combat land degradation.

E. France

Support for the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification and to mitigate the effects of drought remains a cornerstone of French cooperation policy in environmental and development assistance matters.

In accordance with article 7 of part II of the Convention, and also because of traditional links, France's efforts in this area prioritize the affected country Parties of Africa. These efforts have been continuing since the previous Conference of the Parties (COP (3)).

This priority explains why fewer financial resources are allocated by France to the implementation of the Convention in affected country Parties in regions other than Africa.

France's commitment to these countries of Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean Region is realized, directly or indirectly, in five ways:

Directly:

Through scientific cooperation programmes;

Through bilateral or regional activities in the context of transboundary water resource management programmes;

Through natural resources management projects (water, soil, biodiversity) in the context of the synergy generated by a combination of two or of all three Conventions.

The two latter types of activities are for the most part carried out in the framework of FFEM.

Indirectly:

By making financial resources available for the overall institutional strengthening of the Convention in general;

By means of contributions through CSFD;

By means of French contributions to measures taken to combat desertification by international organizations (World Bank, FAO, UNDP, etc.).

French cooperation agencies are making a special effort through scientific and technical cooperation programmes. To this end, all the French research bodies concerned (CIRAD, IRD, CNRS and INRA) participate not only in research programmes but also in the French Scientific Committee on Desertification. In all the affected regions, these activities are aimed at improving an understanding of desertification and its complex mechanisms with a view to devising appropriate strategies as well as ways and means of dealing with each specific situation.

In addition, the work being done in the framework of CSFC is also of value in respect of all the annexes to the Convention. For example, France is contributing to the forthcoming development of socioecological observation modelling by ROSELT, the results of which will be of benefit to all Parties to the Convention.

This generation of synergy with other developed county Parties and affected country Parties is continuing to improve ways and means of implementing the Convention in general.

France, which contributed actively to the adoption of the Convention to Combat Desertification, will continue to ensure its implementation, mainly in two vital areas, namely, soil erosion control and the eradication of poverty.

F. Germany

Since the beginning of the 1980s, support to resource management in arid zones and desertification control have played an important role within the framework of German development cooperation. Since the middle of the 1990s, this sector has become even more significant thanks to the UNCCD, which raised awareness among the Latin American and Asian public and development policymakers of the growing threat to natural resources in the arid zones of that continent. German Technical and Financial Cooperation currently supports 248 projects accounting for a total volume of commitments of about DM 2.9 billion. Some 60 per cent of the projects supported are being carried out in 25 African countries (the focus region of the UNCCD), 25 per cent in Asia and 15 per cent in Latin America.

It must be noted that our partner countries in South America have consciously and visibly established links between a number of these projects and their national action programmes and the process of UNCCD implementation (cf. 4.1-4.2). Presently, Germany provides financial and technical support to the following 10 Latin American countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru. Within a new project in Cuba, the National Action Programme and watershed management are being supported.

In Asia, Germany supports natural resource management and anti-desertification measures in 14 countries: Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Turkmenistan, Turkey, China and Mongolia (cf. 4.3-4.4). There are only a few exceptional cases in which Germany's Asian partner countries have consciously linked new projects in the field of resource management to the UNCCD. However, in the Central Asian and Caucasian transition countries there is growing interest in the UNCCD. The German Government fosters exchange within and across regions in order to support the countries in resolving cross-border conflict over resources, especially with regard to water management.

Now that the Central Asian countries have decided to draw up a subregional action programme, the German side followed the proposal of the UNCCD secretariat to provide technical and financial assistance to that initiative (cf. 4.4). By getting involved in this way, Germany wants to give expression to the great significance it attaches to regional cooperation in

Central Asia in the field of the environment and natural resource protection. Important elements of such regional cooperation will include capacity-building, exchange of information, biodiversity protection, and water and land management.

The German Government is aware that in ratifying the UNCCD, it has assumed the obligation to do everything within its power to foster implementation. In order to be able to do that, the German Government is continuously investing efforts into mainstreaming the UNCCD into bilateral and multilateral development cooperation (cf. 3.). For this purpose, a permanent Focal Point was established within GTZ (1994), and the Convention Project to Combat Desertification ("CCD Project") was created (1999) to support the coordination of public and private, German and multilateral actors engaged in combating desertification.

Through a UNCCD network that has existed for a number of years now, relevant institutions and projects under Germany's bilateral cooperation programme engage in an exchange of relevant information on desertification control and UNCCD implementation (cf. 2.1). This network also provided for input from a broad range of persons into this year's national report. The development institutions' desk officers in charge of the various regions receive support in giving due attention to the UNCCD when programming bilateral cooperation.

One of the first instruments that the German Government created as early as in 1995 to support the UNCCD process was a Special Fund (cf. 2.2). Originally endowed with some DM 6 million, that Special Fund has already assisted a wide range of mainly African countries in drawing up their national action programmes. In the future, the Special Fund will be used for UNCCD implementation in countries of other regions as well, but will also include measures of regional or even global coverage, as well as studies and analyses of core relevance to UNCCD implementation.

Through an additional contribution of DM 1 million to the UNCCD budget ("Bonn Fund"), Germany supports events organized by the UNCCD secretariat (cf. 2.3).

The German Government engaged in an intensive exchange of information to encourage multilateral and regional organizations such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank to participate in desertification control programmes in Latin America and Central Asia (cf. 3.2, 4.5). In addition, it has motivated German scientists involved in arid zone research to form a network and become more actively interested in the process of UNCCD implementation (www.uni-bielefeld.de/desertnet). A number of initiatives were undertaken to raise the German public's awareness of the urgency of desertification problems (cf. 3.3).

Nineteen ninty-nine saw the beginning of intensive cooperation with German NGOs in the context of the UNCCD (cf. 3.4). An extensive analysis to be drawn up by the "Working Group Desertification" is to determine the level of activities by German NGOs within the context of desertification control, and to identify openings for increased NGO involvement in future support to UNCCD implementation. Activities for disseminating information and for targeted basic and further training are included.

Outlook (cf. 5.): There are a number of encouraging examples now of the UNCCD lending fresh impetus to desertification control and of an impressive number of developing

countries having completed their NAPs or being about to finalize them. Yet it is still a challenge to make the UNCCD a universally accepted strategic framework for resource management in arid zones. There are a number of developing countries that have produced UNCCD national action programmes, but there are still investments in important UNCCD-related areas that are made without reference to these NAPs and without attention for the principles of the Convention. The decision to limit responsibility for the UNCCD to environmental administrations led to the isolation of the UNCCD process in many countries and thus, to a dangerous financial bottleneck for the programmes envisaged. This is why vigorous steps urgently need to be undertaken - both by developing countries and by donors - to mainstream the UNCCD into the central efforts for social and economic development. In this context, it also appears urgent to reach international agreement on quality standards for UNCCD implementation and to give greater attention to understanding the economic aspects of desertification control and of resource management in arid zones.

G. Israel

This report summarizes the activities of the State of Israel as a party to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) during 2000 towards aiding The Affected Developing Country Parties of the UNCCD.

Many different organizations within Israel promote activities aimed at assisting Affected Developing Country Parties to combat desertification. These organizations include: government ministries (i.e., Environment, Agriculture, Science, and Foreign Affairs), non-governmental organizations (i.e., Friends of the Earth Middle East, The Peres Center for Peace, The Jewish National Fund, etc.), and academic institutions.

Israel conducted training and consulting activities in 12 African countries, seven Asian countries, one European country, and in friendly Middle East countries on issues related to combating desertification. Israeli scientists conducted joint research projects on issues related to combating desertification with scientists from four African countries, ten Asian countries, and one European country. MASHAV, the Center for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered 12 courses in Israel in areas related to combating desertification to researchers from Affected Developing Country Parties.

H. Italy

The Parliamentary Law for Italian Cooperation to Development n.49/1987 explicitly mentions among its objectives the sustainable use and management of natural resources and environmental conservation, along with the promotion of human resources, the attention to gender issue, the satisfaction of basic needs of local population and the elimination of poverty. Engagement towards areas deeply affected by desertification began in 1982 when the Parliament approved the "Italian initiative for the Sahel": interventions during this period were characterized by the adoption of an integrated approach to rural development, including emergency interventions whenever necessary, flexibility of implementation and the pursuit of local populations' involvement into project activities.

Traditionally the greatest part of Italian ODA has been addressed to Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa and West Africa still scores first in terms of both funds and number of interventions. But in the last years North Africa which has been considered in an increasing number of projects together with West Asian countries, has received attention. This region has benefited also of more than 12 per cent of the Italian contribution to the MEDA-Programme of the European Union.

Attention to countries affected by recent conflicts (Kosovo, Albania, Iran, Iraq, Palestinian Territories etc.) will certainly contribute to increase the number of projects addressed to areas in country Parties of regions other than Africa.

Climatic characteristics, and typologies of interventions different from those considered during the last eighteen years of interventions in affected countries of Africa and West Asia are factors determining the low figures of resources and number of interventions addressed to Southern America and Asian countries.

The channelling of Italian ODA through the Trust Funds with International Organizations has gained increasing importance since 1992. It is likely that a certain percentage of these funds went and goes to activities responding to the mandate of the Convention to Combat Desertification, sometimes addressed also to regions other than Africa, especially in the case of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Programme for the Environment (UNEP), the World Food Programme (WFP) etc.

An increasing role is played and will be played in future by Italian NGOs and Universities.

Interventions of the Italian Co-operation can be classified under the following Thematic Fields:

- support to activities related to information systems, assessment and early warning system on Desertification;

- evaluation of applicability of traditional knowledge to National Action Programmes to combat Desertification;

- measures to implement sustainable agro-rural development and conservation programmes: they include multi-faceted interventions aimed at tackling and improving, through an integrated approach, natural resources management, socio-economic conditions and institutional issues in rural areas;

- measures to improve the economic environment with a view to eradicating poverty;

- measures to conserve natural resources;

- measures to improve institutional organization.

Joint activities between the Directorate General for Development Co-operation and the secretariat of the UNCCD undertaken for the year 2000, will contribute to the financing of son initiative addressed also to affected country parties of regions other than Africa.

In particular, financial support to national and regional activities in Latin America and the Caribbean is being processed for a total amount of US$250,000, addressed mainly to the national reporting process and UNCCD related seminars.

I. Japan

In recent years, along with the expansion in the scope, scale, and types of human activities, various global environment issues have emerged, and they are recognized as potenti threats to human beings. International cooperation is essential in this regard, because the deterioration of the global environment is feared to substantially affect the world's population, and because this problem cannot be effectively dealt with by a single nation. Furthermore, it is important for developed countries in their assistance to developing countries to support the developing countries' "ownership" and to cooperate in achieving sustainable development. Japan regards the global environmental issues, including combating desertification, as one of th most important areas in which the country should make its international contribution.

The outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Developm and "Agenda 21", specified the details of the comprehensive efforts related to global environmental issues. Chapter 12 of "Agenda 21", titled "Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Combating Desertification and Drought", sets forth a specific action programme to tackle desertification.

At UNCED, basic agreement was reached on the establishment of the intergovernmenta negotiating committee to draw the convention to combat desertification. The Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) entered into force in December 1996, and Japan became a party in December 1998. At the second Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP 2) i December 1998, Japan expressed its determination to continue its cooperation in the field of combating desertification as the largest donor country to the UNCCD.

It is stipulated in article 26 of the UNCCD that each party is to submit a report on the measures taken to implement the Convention. Article 22, meanwhile, stipulates that the Conference of the Parties is to review such reports. Decision 11 of the first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 1) provides for the third session of the Conference of the Partie (COP 3) to review reports from affected African country parties, and for the fourth session (COP 4) to review reports from affected country parties of other regions. The same decision called for developed country Parties to report, at each session of the COP, on their assistance provided to affected developing country Parties reporting for the session, including "informatio on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, both bilaterally and multilaterally".

This report is submitted prior to COP 4, scheduled to be held in Bonn in December 200 This report describes many examples of Japan's efforts, over the period from 1996, when the

UNCCD entered into force, to the end of fiscal 1999, to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in the regions other than Africa, particularly in Asia and Latin America/Caribbean. With regard to Japan's efforts in the African region, Japan submitted its report in August 1999 prior to COP 3.

Japan had been making substantial contributions to the implementation of the Convention even before it officially became a party in December 1998. Through its contributions, Japan has been supporting, for example; various regional meetings in Asia such as the ministerial meeting, focal point meetings, experts meetings and workshops; national awareness-raising seminars and regional activities in Latin America and the Caribbean; and national report preparation by Asian, Latin American and Caribbean country parties.

Furthermore, Japan hosted an experts workshop (TPN1 workshop), held at the United Nations University in Tokyo on 28-30 June 2000, on desertification monitoring and assessment with respect to the Thematic Program Networks (TPNs) in the context of the development of Asia's regional action programme for UNCCD. This workshop was designed to promote scientific and technical cooperation concerning desertification monitoring and assessment. The workshop was attended by about 70 participants including experts and UNCCD national focal points from 14 Asian countries, international organizations and other countries. The workshop was held with the cooperation of the Government of Japan, the UNCCD secretariat, the United Nations University, China, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. The outcome of this workshop will be reported at the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 4), slated to be held in Bonn in December 2000.

Japan's cooperative measures include the bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects. Japan has been implementing ODA projects which contribute to combating desertification, in the areas such as conservation of water resources, reforestation and forest conservation, and agricultural development. There are various ODA schemes through which these projects have been implemented. These schemes include: Development Investment; Project-type Technical Cooperation; General Grant Aid; Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects; and Yen Loan. In addition, with a view to enhancing scientific and technical capabilities to combat desertification in various countries, Japan sends Japanese experts overseas and accepts trainees from abroad.

A variety of study and research activities are being conducted by Japanese institutions. For example, the Environment Agency of Japan conducts research on measures to combat desertification and also provides the Global Environment Research Fund to promote research on desertification. Also, Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and Japan Green Resources Corporation conduct a study for combating desertification in Asia and a study for preventing soil erosion in Latin America. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Association for International Cooperation of Agriculture and Forestry conduct research on prospects of utilizing desert areas for agriculture in Mongolia. Study and research activities are also carried out at the Arid Land Research Center, Tottori University.

Financial assistance has been provided to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in and outside Japan through various schemes including the Japan Fund for Global Environment (Japan Environment Corporation), the Promotion of Private Sector Activities for Global Tree Planting

(Japan International Forestry Promotion and Cooperation Center), the Promotion of NGOs Activities in the field of Agriculture and Forestry (Association for International Cooperation of Agriculture and Forestry), and the Postal Savings for International Voluntary Aid (Post Office).

Japan has been contributing funds to international organizations which are involved in activities to combat desertification. Examples contained in this report are: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); World Meteorological Organization (WMO); Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR); International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD; the World Bank); Global Environment Facility (GEF); and Asian Development Bank (ADB).

As stated above, Japan has been furthering international cooperation through numerous supportive measures to combat desertification.

J. Netherlands

The purpose of this communication is to inform the Fourth Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) about the measures taken by the Netherlands' Development Cooperation to assist in the preparation and implementation of UNCCD action programmes in affected non-African countries, including information on financial resources it has provided or is providing.

Because the Convention is directly linked with development issues in drylands, the Netherlands Development Cooperation is central to this report. Most of the policy objectives of Netherlands international cooperation match those of the Convention precisely, particularly the attention to the connections between poverty reduction, the environment, institutional development, and local participation.

The relevant departments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Netherlands Embassies in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as NGOs, were involved in drawing up this report. They were asked to summarize their contributions to the implementation of the UNCCD, including the consultative process, the measures taken and interventions performed, and their financial commitment.

The Minister for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands has redefined the Netherlands' strategy for development cooperation and policy priorities: the Netherlands now maintains a structural bilateral aid relationship with only a limited number of countries (known as the 17+4), which meet certain criteria: poverty, good governance and good macroeconomic and socio-economic policy. Bilateral cooperation continues in several other countries but is limited to activities within one sector or theme.

The Netherlands policy on implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification is primarily aimed at supporting the preparation and implementation of National Action Programmes (NAPs). Support at regional or global level focuses on interventions aimed at increasing the efficiency of NAPs.

Some interventions supported have a direct impact on the control of desertification, such as soil and water conservation, combating land degradation, sustainable management of natural resources, reforestation, improving agricultural and pastoral practices.

Other interventions have an indirect impact on desertification control, such as support for the development of alternative energy sources, awareness-raising campaigns, institution and capacity building, and the creation of constructive partnerships with local organizations and NGOs.

Institutional support is an important aspect of the Netherlands' development assistance, in particular institutional strengthening, organizational capacity building and the development of regulatory and legislative frameworks. More thought should be given to how this type of assistance might benefit organizations involved in implementing the UNCCD.

Netherlands embassies and departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs play different roles in the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification. Embassies rather than ministerial departments contribute the lion's share of the funding.

It should be noted that departments have only limited budgets and focus on policy development rather than project support. The Embassies have been delegated the tasks of decision-making and managing development assistance projects and programmes.

The report shows that the Netherlands' total commitment to ongoing programmes and projects combating desertification in non-African countries is NLG 579 million, of which 33 per cent (NLG 191 million) comes from the budgets of ministerial departments, and 67 per cent (NLG 388 million) from embassies' budgets (see figures below). The main sectors supported are: direct environmental protection, integrated rural development, and institutional strengthening.

In countries where the Convention is not an urgent issue on the national agenda, Netherlands embassies focus instead on the country's own priorities. In these countries, embassies do very little to actively encourage implementation of the UNCCD, but might support UNCCD-related interventions. Embassies' varying levels of involvement partly reflect the preferences expressed by the countries in question, and partly point to the need to give more attention to mainstreaming the convention at embassy level.

The Netherlands' development cooperation touches on many areas related to desertification control, but does not specifically target this issue. For this reason, Netherlands embassies and developing countries have seldom discussed desertification control, except in relation to other topics. This demonstrates a strong need for mainstreaming the Convention in the relevant development programmes.

In general, Netherlands embassies in non-African countries are still only marginally involved in the formulation and implementation of National Action Programmes. Implementation of the UNCCD is only in a few cases the direct topic of consultation between the Netherlands Embassy and the recipient country.

Reports have failed to show that local population and civil society are sufficiently involved in the implementation of the Convention and the National Action Programmes. Especially little is known about participation by the private sector and social groups such as women, pastoralists, and youth. Such participation is however necessary to successfully combat desertification. Public awareness of the importance of combating desertification could still be increased.

To improve the implementation of the Convention, the Netherlands strongly encourages the participation of stakeholders at all levels. In line with Article 13 of the Convention, supporting local participation (by civil society as well as local governments) is a priority. Existing processes of collaboration and integration are to be encouraged and supported. Examples of current attempts by the Netherlands to improve its dialogue with developing countries are the policy of delegating decision-making on development assistance to the embassies and the introduction of "ownership" and a sectoral approach which acknowledges the responsibility and leading role of the recipient country"s government in development assistance.

Finally, the Netherlands looks forward to the review of implementation during the upcoming fourth COP, based on national reports from both non-African recipient countries and donor countries, and hopes this review will help to identify difficulties and maximize the benefits of successful measures.

K. Switzerland

In Asia, the main partner countries of Switzerland for bilateral cooperation, including measures for combating desertification, are India, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam; in Central Asia Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; in the South Caucasus Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Switzerland has financially supported Government and NGO activities in relation with the preparation of NAPs in Central Asia, South Caucasus and in Pakistan, although Switzerland has not been involved yet in any partnership agreements for NAPs in Asia.

In addition, Switzerland has also financed a great number of activities to combat desertification, namely in the field of sustainable land use, soil and water conservation in semi-arid areas and drylands to secure the production base and improve the socio-economic situation of dryland-farmers and especially women, as well as research activities related to crops, rangeland management and production techniques.

As the programmes in the field of sustainable resource management aim to contribute to the efforts of people living in erosion-prone semi-arid rural areas and dry mountain areas to improve their livelihood system, a particular importance is given to a participatory approach and the empowerment of women and men.

At the regional level, SDC contributes to different research related programmes and specialized Institutions in drylands and sustainable soil and water management.

It will be one of the future challenges to link their results and lessons learnt with the process of implementation of NAPs and SRAPs, as well as to reinforce awareness on desertification risks in endangered regions where SDC already supports programmes.

The financial resources allocated to activities to combat desertification are about 62.6 million Swiss francs (US$ 39 mio.) for the period 1997-2000, which means about CHF 15.5 mio. per year (US$ 9.8 mio.).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, Switzerland has not yet participated in partnership agreements related to NAPs. However the approach promoted through the UNCCD, namely to create multipartnership agreements between public-private-and community or grass-root based organizations for the implementation of action programmes is an already well established form for the implementation of almost all the ongoing programmes supported by SDC, as the following overview shows.

In Latin America the partner countries are Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and in Central America: Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador. Although Switzerland is in financial terms not involved explicitly in the preparation or implementation of NAPs, there are desertification related activities, aiming at sustainable use of natural resources in dry-land hills of Central America and in the Andean highlands of Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru. It will be one of the future challenges to link and bring in the results to the process of implementation of NAPs and SRAPs as well as to reinforce awareness on desertification risks in endangered regions where SDC already supports programmes.

The financial resources allocated to desertification related activities are about 32 million Swiss francs (US$ 20 mio.) for the period 1997-2000, which means CHF 8 mio.(US$ 5 mio.) per year.

L. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The UK is committed to the elimination of poverty through work in partnership with other governments, business, civil society, the research community and multilateral institutions.

The UK recognizes that the issues of desertification, land degradation and poverty are closely related to issues of poverty. There are strong connections in the UK's work to combat poverty in countries affected by desertification and activities in support of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. We regard it as important that the objectives of the Convention are not pursued as stand-alone activities, but that the issues of desertification and land degradation are integrated into the development plans of developing countries affected.

The UK is seeking to enhance our support of implementation of the Convention. This includes by focusing on assisting in the implementation of national strategies for sustainable development and in our extensive sustainable rural livelihoods approach to tackling rural poverty.

The UK has not provided any direct support for the preparation of National Action Programmes in affected countries. We are willing to provide support if this is recognized as a

priority during country strategy discussions with development partners. The UK will continue to address the need to promote National Action Programmes through national strategies for sustainable development. We will look for opportunities to rationalize and simplify links and complementarities between National Action Programmes and national strategies for sustainable development. We are engaged in this process in a number of countries affected by desertification and land degradation, including in Latin America and Asia.

The UK has not engaged in any partnership agreements with affected countries in the regions covered under this report. We will consider how we can best support national programmes based on priorities established by the countries themselves, including through partnership agreements, if requested by the country concerned.

The DFID bilateral programme to areas affected by desertification other than in Africa is administered by six geographical departments, based in London and in affected regions. These departments administered a budget in 1999/2000 of nearly $450 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, about $570 million in Asia and about $135 million in Central and Eastern Europe.

The UK administers its activity in combating desertification as an integral component of other development activities and strategies. The monitoring and separate identification of all desertification-related activity is problematic.

DFID is engaged in desertification-related projects in a number of countries in Latin America with total commitments of over US$ 28 million. These projects address the livelihood needs of those who live in or near lands affected by drought and degradation. We are working in partnership with regional governments and institutions in an ongoing effort to manage land effectively.

Our work in Bolivia has a number of goals including strengthening capacity of resource-poor farmers as well as the establishment of more effective policies to support livelihoods. In Brazil our programme includes a project aimed at assisting different state and municipal institutions to collaborate in the production and implementation of a sustainable development plan. Other projects in Chile, Colombia and Peru concentrate on improving skills in agricultural technology development including in the monitoring of soil quality.

Although DFID is not funding any projects in the Caribbean directly related to implementation of the Convention, work in the region aims to increase the use of participatory natural resource management systems.

UK commitments to Asia in support of the Convention total over US$ 210 million. The UK is involved in a very substantial programme in India where we have committed over US$ 160 million to projects which go toward combating the effects of desertification in semi-arid and drought prone areas. The projects invoke a sustainable livelihoods approach to addressing rural poverty and vulnerability to drought. We also work in Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Thailand and the West Bank and Gaza on projects related to desertification.

Although the UK has a significant development assistance programme in Central and Eastern Europe, we have not provided any assistance directly related to desertification.

The United Kingdom recognizes the work of multilateral organizations and works with them in seeking to achieve sustainable development in the world's poorest countries. We support a number of multilateral organizations that contribute to the development of the poorest countries affected by desertification and drought (including the EC, UNDP, UNEP, FAO and the World Bank). The UK has pledged over £215 million to the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The UK continues to seek to ensure that the GEF provides significant support to desertification-related activities within the context of its operational strategy.

As future plans, we will continue to work on the development of national strategies for sustainable development. This will include work with the Governments of Bolivia, Nepal and Thailand to promote workable strategies which support the principles behind NAPs.

We will continue to work to mainstream environmental concerns into the programmes of DFID, the European Community and other development institutions, taking account of concerns addressed under the Convention.

We will continue to develop and apply the livelihoods approach to alleviate poverty in vulnerable rural areas.

We will also expect more requests from developing countries for assistance to address desertification, within the framework of National Action Programmes, as they are established.

PART TWO: SYNTHESIS OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision 11/COP.1 on procedures for the communication of information and revie of implementation, the Conference of the Parties (COP):

(a) Requested developed country Parties to report, at each session, on measures take to assist affected developing countries concerned by the session, in the preparation and implementation of action programmes and to communicate information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention;

(b) Requested Parties to submit their reports to the Secretariat at least six months prior to the session at which they are to be reviewed;

(c) Requested the Secretariat to compile the summaries of reports submitted and to prepare a synthesis of the reports, setting out the trends emerging in the implementation of the Convention.

2. In its decision 4/COP.3 concerning its programme of work (para. 1 (a) (iii)), the Conference of the Parties decided to include in the agenda of its fourth session and, if necessary its fifth session, an item entitled "Review of reports by developed country Parties on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes of affected country Parties of regions other than Africa, including information on financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention".

II. REPORTS RECEIVED FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES

3. On 28 January 2000, the Secretariat sent a letter of reminder to developed country Parti requesting them to submit their reports before 15 April 2000, in other words, six months before the first date fixed for the Conference of the Parties. By 25 May, reports had been received fro the 10 following countries: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy (summary only), the Netherlands, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. Only the reports dealin with regions other than Africa are covered by the present synthesis; the report of the European Community is included in the synthesis of reports submitted by intergovernmental organizatio (ICCD/COP (4)/3/Add.5). The first part of the present document contains the summaries of reports covered by the synthesis, as well as the summaries received after the synthesis had been carried out. All reports are available on the secretariat's Internet site (www.unccd.int).

4. The letter of reminder sent to the developed country Parties following an informal meeting at Recife on 25 November 1999, during the third session of the Conference of the Parties, was accompanied by a note by the secretariat. In its note, the secretariat recommended that reports should comprise three sections, each divided into two parts: an "Asia" section, a "Latin America and the Caribbean" section and an "Other affected country Parties" section, an that each section should consist of a part A dealing strictly with the implementation of the Convention and the measures taken to support the preparation and implementation of the

programme of action in affected country Parties in regions other than Africa, and a part B dealing with other activities connected with action to combat desertification. In accordance with the format described in decision 11/COP.1, part A would consist first of a summary, followed by a description of consultative processes and partnership agreements, and lastly a description of the measures taken to draw up and implement programmes of action.

5. A synthesis of these reports is presented in section III below on the basis of a layout reflecting the Secretariat's recommendations for the drafting of reports, namely, an "Asia" section, a "Latin America and the Caribbean" section, an "Other affected country Parties" section. Each section consists of three parts: (i) "Consultative processes and partnership agreements", (ii) "Measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels and particularly information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, both bilaterally and multilaterally", and (iii) "Other activities connected with efforts to combat desertification". The content of parts (i) and (ii) is based essentially on the analysis of the parts A of various reports, as described in paragraph 4. In view of the value of some of the information contained in part B of the reports, it is analysed in part (iii). Section III is followed by section IV which highlights general trends in accordance with decision 11/COP.1, and a section V containing the conclusions. It will be noted that, in general, the reports submitted by developed countries to the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties are much more homogeneous than those submitted at the previous session. More detailed observations concerning the format and layout of these reports are presented at the end of this document in the conclusions.

III. SYNTHESIS OF THE INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THE REPORTS OF DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES

A. Asia

(i) Consultative processes and partnership agreements

6. Most of the Parties express support for activities that strengthen consultative processes in the affected countries; these concern the effective participation of the various actors concerned in the definition of communication strategies connected with the implementation of the Convention and the elaboration of the National Action Plan (NAP), the organization of seminars and working groups and the creation of local networks. By actors is meant national or local officials as well as various groups of farmers, livestock breeders, village associations, women and various NGOs. These activities also include efforts to strengthen capacity through education, training and the transfer of knowledge or know-how, as well as participation in communication activities. Other than these statements of principle, which hold good for any cooperative endeavour, the reports contain very few details having a direct bearing on the the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification. In general they imply support for local development activities which emphasize the integration of measures to combat desertification into various local and national rural development strategies, into forestry or hydraulic projects and into erosion control measures. The ultimate objective of these activities is to strengthen civil society with the help of local NGOs or groups of farmers and livestock breeders. The reports accordingly refer to a series of measures designed to mobilize various vulnerable groups (especially women), awareness-arousing campaigns and training at the village level, as well as inventories of

traditional technologies in China, India, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Central Asia. Activities of this nature are supported mainly by Belgium, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, as well as by Canada and the United Kingdom. Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and the Palestinian authorities have embarked upon consultative processes which include strategies for the mobilization of resources at the local and village level as a means of combating desertification in the framework of the elaboration of their future NAP, with the support of Finland. The reports indicate that a large part of these activities take place through cooperation between the NGOs of developed country Parties and local NGOs.

7. There is no mention in the reports of partnership agreements dealing specifically with the implementation of the Convention. However, they all refer to other types of partnership agreements concluded between the affected country Parties of Asia, their subregional and regional organizations and the developed country Parties. Such agreements are generally the responsibility of the embassies of the developed country Parties which conduct negotiations with the partners with whom they decide what cooperative activities are to be carried out. These agreements are of a general nature and cover all sectors in which cooperation projects are feasible without necessarily emphasizing measures to combat desertification in the strict sense of the term. The reports also mention partnership agreements concluded with the multilateral organizations of the United Nations system, such as the World Bank and GEF (Global Environment Facility), UNDP (and particularly the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought - UNSO), UNEP and FAO. International scientific bodies such as ICRISAT (International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics), CIAT (International Centre for Tropical Agriculture) and ICARDA (International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas), all three of which are members of GCRAI (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research), are specifically mentioned owing to their scientific activities in arid zones and the support they receive from certain developed country Parties.

(ii) Measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels and particularly information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, both bilaterally and multilaterally

8. The national contact points and national coordination bodies of certain affected country Parties of Central Asia have received extensive assistance from Germany and Switzerland in the preparation of their national reports and their national concertation activities with a view to the formulation of their NAPs (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan and Turkmenistan). The efforts of Nepal and Thailand to draw up their NAP are being supported by the United Kingdom in the broader context of support for the formulation of sustainable development plans in these countries. Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and the Palestinian authorities have received considerable assistance from Finland in the preparation and implementation of their NAP; this assistance was organized through UNDP/UNSO.

9. As regards the integration of NAPs into economic and social development plans, most of the developed country Parties simply indicate that they attach priority to this matter but are taking very little specific action in this area. This is, however, being done by Germany, which has drawn up a special programme for this purpose, managed directly by the relevant ministry and targeted at all affected country Parties. The Netherlands states that it is endeavouring to

make all cooperation officials aware of the need to integrate national action plans into development plans. Nepal is supported by Denmark in its efforts to do so whereas Finland, in the context of the activities referred to above in respect of certain affected country Parties of Western Asia, is supporting efforts to link NAPs with national environmental action plans (NEAP).

10. However, the reports also indicate that most of the developed country Parties contribute indirectly to the implementation of action programmes by the development of general activities aimed at combating desertification in virtually all the countries with which they cooperate. These activities, which are of a general nature, are carried out in the framework of environmental action plans or integrated rural development plans, agricultural development plans, livestock breeding or forestry plans, and are usually discussed in part B of their reports.

11. As regards information about the financial resources provided in connection with measures to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes, the reports received indicate that it relates mainly to part B and only to a very small extent to part A. The analysis of projects reveals that some of them involve activities falling under part A as well as part B, but that it is impossible to separate financing specific to one or the other of these two parts, since only overall funding is indicated. Projects of this type include activities supported by Germany in Mongolia and Turkmenistan; by Belgium in China; by Denmark in Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam; by the Netherlands in Sri Lanka and Yemen; and by Switzerland in India, Nepal, Pakistan and Viet Nam as well as in Central Asia.

12. Practically all the developed country Parties mention their national scientific desertification and land degradation programmes as well as those that they are implementing in the context of their scientific cooperation with the affected countries without, however, going into detail; such programmes generally concern satellite observations of the Earth, follow-up and early warning systems and geographical information systems. Germany's report indicates that it is providing considerable methodological support for the elaboration and harmonization of national information systems on desertification and the definition of indicators through its support for the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (also supported by France, Italy and Switzerland).

13. In the countries of Central Asia regional exchange processes and specific activities with a view to the formulation of subregional and regional action programmes have been supported by Germany and Switzerland in the form of regional seminars associating all national focal points (in February and July 2000). Some regional scientific institutions, such as ICARDA and ICIMOD (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development), are starting to become involved in activities designed to support the elaboration of regional programmes which are being put in place with the backing of the main developed country Parties.

(iii) Other activities connected with measures to combat desertification

14. Part B of the report deals, in general, with other cooperation activities designed to combat desertification. It reveals that the large number of projects being carried out on a cooperative basis between the affected country Parties of Asia and the developed country Parties comprise measures to combat desertification and land degradation. These projects can be grouped under two headings:

(a) The first category consists of projects that are very specifically linked to the management of natural resources and related technical aspects, such as erosion control, the protection of catchment areas, the exploration of groundwater resources, the improvement of hydraulics and irrigation, the improvement of farming practices in arid and semi-arid regions, techniques of working the soil and improvement of planting materials. Other projects concern livestock breeding and pastoralism techniques, the management of forest resources and the improvement of certain forestry methods by the use of modern technology. Yet other projects are concerned with inventories of natural resources and natural resources management follow-ups using various methods such as satellite observations of the Earth and geographical information systems;

(b) The second category covers a much broader range of projects that may be called socio-economic and sustainable development projects. It embraces everything having to do with measures to combat poverty and to support disadvantaged populations in rural areas, as well as all aspects of land use planning and participative development and, more broadly, everything connected with support for civil society: support for groups of farmers or livestock breeders and disadvantaged groups, either through education and training or by supporting rural credit facilities or structuring the socio-economic context. This category also covers more institutional forms of support to ministries and public research bodies, as well as the reform of State agencies with a view to decentralization. Lastly, many of the projects are energy-related, and involve the promotion of rural energy systems and biogas, as well as projects to protect against and combat fires.

15. The economic information provided about these cooperative projects makes it difficult to obtain a clear picture of the situation owing to the absence or vagueness of certain figures and the different currency units used. However, it may be mentioned, for example, that Germany is at present supporting 62 projects in 14 affected countries of Asia in an amount of some US$ 380 million; the largest projects deal with problems of erosion and the protection of catchment areas and afforestation in China and India. The United Kingdom allocates about US$ 210 million to 11 projects in Asia; of this amount US$ 160 million is spent on activities designed to combat poverty in India. Belgium and Switzerland allocate about US$ 12 million annually to projects in Asia that in general focus on poverty and sustainable development, the management of fragile areas such as mountains, erosion control and the use of appropriate technology. More or less the same amounts are provided by Denmark each year, particularly in India and Nepal, for the management of natural resources. Finland, like Canada and the Netherlands, supports the countries of central Asia and India whereas Italy concentrates on the countries of Western Asia, close to the Mediterranean.

B. Latin America and the Caribbean

(i) Consultative processes and partnership agreements

16. Most of the Parties support the principle of consultative processes involving the actors of civil society in accordance with the concept of participation and decentralization. The actors concerned are the national and local authorities as well as various village associations, associations of farmers and livestock breeders and local groups, such as groups of women and various NGOs. The nature of the support provided varies from country to country. In general it

is integrated into natural resources management and integrated rural development projects, but the reports give very few details of direct support of consultative processes in the elaboration of NAPs. The ultimate objective of these activities is to strengthen civil society with the help of local NGOs and professional groups of farmers and livestock breeders through training, education and transfers of know-how, meetings and awareness-arousing seminars, as well as by means of information campaigns. Activities of this nature are carried out mainly in Argentina, with the support of Germany, and take various forms: formulation of the NAP and related technical projects, both at the national as well as local level, by the organization of meetings of all the actors concerned; support for the national coordination body with a view to their implementation; support for local working groups with a view to the collection of data, the promotion of innovations and their regional dissemination. Moreover, activities are being carried out in the framework of consultative processes with a view to linking rural development projects to the Convention in two States of Brazil (Bahia and Pernambuco) with the support of Germany. Chile and Cuba are also supported by Germany in consultative processes at local level. Other consultative processes of the same nature are under way in Bolivia, Brazil and Chile with the support of Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

17. The reports make no mention of partnership agreements strictly focused on the implementation of the Convention. All the developed country Parties state that they have machinery for partnership and negotiation with the affected countries which is handled by their embassies: the latter being responsible for negotiating and defining with the partners the cooperation measures to be undertaken. However, it must be observed that these partnership agreements are global and do not relate either to combating desertification in the strict sense of the term or the implementation of the Convention. Furthermore, some developed country Parties state that parts of their cooperation activities are effected through the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and through the CIAT, a research body of the CGIAR, which is involved in scientific research relating to the environment and natural resources.

(ii) Measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels, and particularly information on the financial resources they have provided or are providing, both bilaterally and multilaterally

18. From the reports submitted it emerges that a limited number of affected country Parties have received specific support for action of this kind, which is essential for the implementation of the Convention. In Argentina the national coordinating body has drawn up national and local action programmes with the support of Germany under the "Apoyo al programa PAN" project; in Cuba support is being provided for the national focal point and the introduction of the NAP at both national and local levels under another German project. Cuba is also receiving support from the Netherlands through a UNSO-FAO project. The Netherlands is also providing support to Ecuador within the framework of its NAP. As regards the integration of NAPs into economic and social development programmes, most of the developed country Parties merely state that the matter is a priority for them but do not develop any specific activities in that field. However, the matter has formed the subject of support provided by Germany, which has set up a special programme, directly managed by the responsible ministry in Germany, for the purpose. The Netherlands mentions in its report that internal efforts are being made to promote awareness of

these problems among their national officials responsible for cooperation matters. Specific action to bring NAPs more closely into line with sustainable development plans in Bolivia and Brazil is receiving support from the United Kingdom.

19. The reports also indicate that most of the developed country Parties are indirectly contributing to the implementation of action programmes by developing measures to combat desertification in practically all the countries with which they are cooperating. These very specific measures - natural resource management, measures to combat erosion, the improvement of water and forestry resources management and, more generally, integrated rural development projects - find places within environmental management programmes and sometimes refer to the Convention. A few of them are specifically linked to the combat against desertification, and as such are described in part B.

20. In the reports received (part A) there is little information on the financial resources provided for measures taken to assist in the design and implementation of action programmes. In part B, however, which is devoted to projects relating to desertification, there is financial information. An analysis of these projects reveals that some of them comprise activities of both type A and type B; but as only aggregate and global financing figures are given, it is impossible to distinguish between the financing of the two types of activities. The projects of this type which can be identified include measures in the High Andean Plateau, supported by Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

21. Nearly all the developed country Parties make reference to their national scientific programmes relating to desertification and land degradation and to the programmes falling within their scientific cooperation activities with the affected countries, but give no details. These programmes generally relate to the observation of the Earth by satellite, monitoring and early-warning systems and geographical information systems. The report from Germany shows that that country is providing considerable methodological support for the definition and harmonization of national information systems on desertification and the definition of indicators through its subsidiary, the Sahara and Sahel Observatory.

22. Efforts are being made to elaborate subregional and regional programmes, in particular by means of regional seminars. These are being supported by Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (particularly in the Caribbean subregion). These seminars focus on exchanges of experience and the development of awareness in affected countries of the regional dimension of the Convention. They generally imply participation by the World Bank and the IDB.

(iii) Other activities connected with measures to combat desertification

23. Generally speaking, part B of the reports is devoted to other cooperation activities with relevance to desertification. It shows the considerable efforts made by the developed country Parties to combat desertification and land degradation within the framework of the numerous development operations of a more global nature carried out within their own cooperation programmes. These operations can be divided into two categories, as was done in the section on Asia:

(a) The first category contains development operations bearing more specifically on the problems of natural resources management and all its elements and, more generally, on all subjects relating to the improvement of agricultural and stock-rearing production. It will be observed that special attention is devoted to combating erosion (for example, in the Andean countries), and in Asia to the protection of catchment areas, the improvement of hydraulics and irrigation and the improvement of soil working methods, cultivation practices and varieties cultivated. Mention should also be made of the large number of projects on stock-rearing and forest management. Lastly, in Latin America and the Caribbean the same technological concerns as those in Asia are to be observed in the field of observation of the Earth and geographical information systems;

(b) The second category comprises operations with a wider focus concerned with combating poverty and with capacity development. They include training and educational measures in disadvantaged rural areas and activities assisting the emergence of civil society (support for NGOs, groups of farmers and special groups such as women's groups) and supporting rural credit institutions and health. Mention may also be made of projects relating to energy questions.

24. It is difficult to obtain a detailed picture of the economic aspects of these cooperation projects on account of the lack of precision, or the absence, of any data on the amounts mentioned and the range of currencies used. One example is Germany, which devotes some US$ 215 million to ten countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, regularly divided among Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Paraguay. The support to Argentina mentioned earlier in the report from Germany involves an outlay of $10 million, including participatory processes and development. The United Kingdom is spending some US$ 28 million on 15 projects, in which priority is given to combating poverty and local development, in Latin America and the Caribbean. Switzerland and Belgium are devoting respectively some US$ 20 million and US$ 10 million, spread over several years, to projects relating to the management of natural resources and integrated rural development. Denmark has committed US$ 24 million, spread over several years, for the financing of projects concerning the environment in Bolivia.

C. Other affected country Parties

25. Apart from Switzerland, which mentions the South Caucasus in Part B of its report, no other affected country Party is mentioned in the reports received so far.

IV. GENERAL TRENDS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

A. Trends in consultative processes and partnership agreements

26. The developed country Parties all express their support in principle for any action which might strengthen the mechanisms of concertation and consultation and participatory mechanisms and designed, firstly, to take into account the needs of the populations within the framework of measures to combat desertification, and secondly, to improve awareness of the Convention among those populations. The reports mention solid support for everything relating to the strengthening of civil society. However, the number of concrete actions in that field mentioned

in the reports of the developed country Parties is extremely limited. In Asia, measures of this kind are being implemented in the countries of Central Asia, in China, India, Nepal and Pakistan, and also in some countries of Western Asia. In Latin America measures of this kind are encountered essentially in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba and Brazil. There is no mention of the existence of partnership agreements specifically relating to the Convention between the affected countries in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the developed country Parties. Currently measures are decided upon within conventional frameworks managed by the embassies of the developed country Parties in the affected countries.

B. Trends in measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes

27. The reports also give the reasons why the developed country Parties undertake to support the Convention and to combat desertification. Most of the developed country Parties which submitted reports to the secretariat, although considering efforts to elaborate national action programmes essential, seem to have taken little in the way of concrete action to provide support for national focal points and national coordination bodies. In Asia only Germany and Switzerland and, to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom and Finland provide support of this kind. Germany and the Netherlands also assist Latin America in this field. However, certain countries also state that they have not received any requests for support of this kind. Nearly all the reports mention indirect support for the elaboration and implementation of NAPs through the intermediary of sustainable and integrated rural development operations or measures to combat desertification decided upon within the framework of national environment plans or plans of other types. But it is difficult to deduce from that information precise details and amounts. All the reports indicate substantial implication by the developed country Parties in general activities of a scientific nature and more specifically in follow-up and evaluation activities. Few references are made to support for the launching of regional and subregional programmes, and certain developed country Parties observe that, generally speaking, regional strategies are established rather slowly.

C. Trends in other activities connected with measures to combat desertification

28. As was stated in the sections on Asia and on Latin America and the Caribbean, the development operations effected in a framework of cooperation between developed country Parties and affected countries can be divided into two groups: the group of operations focusing on "natural capital" and concerned mainly with the improvement of knowledge and of techniques for the use of natural resources directed to the sound management of environments: and operations concerned with "human capital" and "societal capital". These three capital assets are in fact the foundations of sustainable development. The amounts of the funds committed to operations in these two groups are roughly equivalent. It will be observed that most of the projects mentioned in part B of the reports could also be designated as projects in support of the Conventions on biological diversity and climate change and, more generally, of any activity to promote sustainable development. The amounts allocated to cooperation with the affected countries in Asia appear to be greater than those allocated for cooperation with the affected countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

D. Other trends

(i) Support for the synergy generated by the three Conventions adopted at the Rio Conference

29. No mention is made by the affected country Parties themselves of support for synergy among the three conventions which emerged from the Rio Conference. The only activities mentioned are activities conducted in the developed countries, for instance, in Denmark, with the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources), the WWF (World Wildlife Fund), the GCIAR and the Netherlands. The principal activity in this area is being conducted by the "Global Environmental Convention Task Force" within the framework of the OECD, in particular through the organization of seminars and working groups; among these, a special mention may be made of those held in April and June 2000, which were supported in particular by developed country Parties (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland and the United Kingdom).

(ii) Support for the implementation of the Convention by multilateral action

30. All the developed country Parties give details of their participation in the activities of multilateral organizations to combat desertificaiton; they may participate in the regular programmes of those bodies, at the same time calling attention to the objectives of halting desertification and the implementation of the Convention; alternatively, they may finance technical cooperation projects through the intermediary of trust funds. In the latter case, the activities concerned tend to fall within the scope of part B of the reports. It will be observed that most of the countries state that they try to influence those organizations in the direction of a clearer commitment to combating desertification and a better integration of their action within other environmental plans and development strategies generally. Some of them mention extremely specific measures undertaken in certain key areas (such as water resources), bringing them within the scope of the combat against desertification. Mention is made, for example, of the efforts made by the developed country Parties to support the "Global Water Partnership" and the "Global Water Vision" for purposes of the organization of the Hague Conference of April 2000. Most of the major multilateral organizations concerned - including the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the UNDP, the UNEP, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the WMO (for support for national meteorological services) - are also mentioned in the reports. The research centres within the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and in particular ICRISAT, ICARBA and CIAT, receive support from a number of the developed country Parties which have submitted reports to the secretariat. The international scientific NGOs (such as IUCN and the WWF), with which matters relating to the dovetailing of the Convention to Combat Desertification with the other two conventions (respectively on biological diversity and climate change) are discussed, are mentioned several times. It will also be observed that France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland support the work of the Sahara and Sahel Observatory with a view to developing information systems on diversification and methodologies for the monitoring of indicators of the introduction of the Convention and of progress made.

(iii) Support for the CCD secretariat

31. Certain developed country Parties (Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Switzerland) specifically mentioned their support for the secretariat and its activities, in particular regional or coordination seminars. In particular, their support enables delegations of the affected countries actively to participate in the proceedings of the Conference of the Parties and the Committee on Science and Technology.

(iv) Other efforts made by developed country Parties in measures to combat desertification

32. All the developed country Parties describe in their reports their internal structures ensuring follow-up on the CCD (national focal point, coordination mechanisms, working groups). They also mention the support they provide to their administrations and public services, and in particular to scientific bodies, civil society and national NGOs, to promote greater awareness of the Convention and of measures to combat desertification, and also for the mobilization of resources. They also describe their efforts to support local NGOs in affected country Parties and the competent international NGOs. In particular, details are given of the institutional support provided by Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands to bodies such as the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIEE) and the International NGO Network on Desertification (RIOD), which are conducting major activities at local level in the affected countries.

V. CONCLUSIONS

A. Conclusions on the organization and approach of the reports

33. Generally speaking, the reports received follow the recommended structure. In some of them, however, the plan has been reversed; instead of proceeding region by region they begin by describing consultative processes together with the measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes. In other cases they describe the activities of the country concerned in accordance with the organization of their own international cooperation machinery, describing in detail the projects supported by each directorate within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the various other technical ministries. Occasionally the activities described reflect information received from embassies. Generally speaking, most of the resumés cover the whole of the report rather than each of its parts (Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, other affected countries). The length of the reports received varies from 4 to 40 pages. Most of them are 15-20 pages in length, including annexes with lists of projects and the addresses of the responsible bodies. It will be observed, however, that there is more material in the section on Asia than in that on Latin America and the Caribbean and that there is practically nothing in the section entitled "Other affected country Parties". The reports contain general descriptions of cooperation policies and the administrative organization of the cooperation machinery in the developed countries, lists of their priority action areas and the criteria for the selection of projects; occasionally information is given on the conditions attaching to projects.

34. In nearly all their reports the developed country Parties state that they have difficulty in distinguishing between what is actually devoted to measures to combat desertification within the framework of the implementation of the Convention and what is devoted to global activities relating to the integrated management of natural resources or highly specific activities such as the protection of catchment areas or the improvement of cultivated species. As a result, there are imbalances, not only between the different parts of the reports (particularly between parts A and B) but also among the reports themselves, according to what each developed country Party has considered, or has not considered, as falling strictly within the scope of the Convention. The reports give but little detail on the measures taken to implement the Convention (part A), and in particular in the preparation and implementation of national action plans, or on support for the national coordination bodies and other national focal points. They are more detailed on the subject of the other activities to combat desertification (part B). All in all, it can be said that part A takes up one third of the reports and part B two thirds. However, some reports state quite clearly that none of the activities undertaken fall within part A. In addition, attention must be drawn to some confusion in part B in the presentation of projects and programmes; the amounts involved are often given in national currency, the duration of the measures mentioned is not always clear and some of those measures have little connection with measures to combat desertification stricto sensu.

B. Conclusions on the analysis of partnership processes and measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes

35. The developed country Parties have equal interest in cooperation with Asia and with Latin America and the Caribbean. However, it can be observed from the descriptions of activities that Asia takes up a little more attention than Latin America and the Caribbean. Most of the developed country Parties describe their cooperation policies and the relative priority given to the combat against desertification and land degradation and to the implementation of the Convention. They name the "target" countries which are given priority in their efforts and, in certain cases, their priority theme areas. They describe the types of partnership they offer and suggest that affected countries should be more active in making requests. The reports show that there are no partnership agreements specifically concerned with the implementation of the Convention; instead there are special agreements concluded within the framework of already existing general agreements. All the developed country Parties express their support of principle for the implementation of the Convention; but, as was said earlier, they tend to support projects rather than institutional mechanisms.

C. Overall conclusions

36. An examination of the reports from developed country Parties reveals much more substantive information on their general activities in the fields of combating desertification and sustainable development (part B of the reports) than on their activities in support of consultative procedures or the measures they are taking to assist in the preparation and implementation of CCD action programmes (part A of the reports).

37. Most of the developed country Parties state that combating desertification should form an integral part of the struggle against poverty, which has become a priority objective of their cooperation policies.

38. One continuing thread running through the activities of the developed country Parties is that of support for integrated rural development operations. In more general terms, these countries insist on the need to coordinate NAPs with other plans, and in particular economic and social development plans and national environment action plans (NEAPs). Currently, too, a broader concept - that of "sustainable development plans" - is beginning to develop with the support of OECD. The countries concerned recognize the difficulty of the exercise: the transversal, interdisciplinary and intersectoral nature of the combat against desertification and its insertion into a long-term framework often explain the difficulties of implementing it.

39. Another ever-present priority is that of support for good governance and the development of civil society. That support takes in particular the forms of strengthening of village organizations (especially women's groups) and representative structures such as trade unions, associations, occupational groupings and the various NGOs; of the constitution of legal frameworks for the settlement of disputes (for example, over land); of education and training, which are mentioned everywhere as part of action to strengthen national capacities; of the creation of, and access to, information on the environment and natural resources and on good local technologies and practices; and of exchanges of information and a guarantee of access thereto for purposes of participative governance. Research projects are also often mentioned as well as activities to constitute inventories of natural resources and the monitoring of desertification, harmonization of methods and circulation of data.

40. Finally, all the developed country Parties recall that they have their own development aid procedures and policies and their own fields for priority action and that it is the responsibility of affected countries to submit the requests necessary for the start-up of programmes and projects and to coordinate the different activities financed by external aid. They all recall their commitment in the combat against desertification and their attachment to the implementation of the Convention. However, some countries observe that certain affected countries do not seem to consider the combat against desertification as their first priority. Finally, the developed country Parties seem to wish to receive more requests from affected countries.